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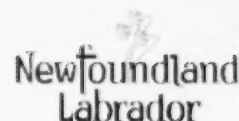
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Tourism, Culture and Recreation
May 16, 2008

Province Invests \$1.2 Million in Marble Mountain Infrastructure

The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, was on the west coast today to announce a \$1.2 million investment in Marble Mountain Resort designed to upgrade and expand infrastructure at the ski resort.

The funding, to be provided over a three-year period, will fund new ski lift equipment; new and improved slope development; expanded terrain development for both skiers and snowboarders; maintenance to the lodge itself, and some basic service system upgrades.

"The Provincial Government recognizes these improvements are required to ensure Marble Mountain is able to provide its clientele – residents and tourists alike – with the kind of quality experiences they expect and deserve," Minister Jackman said.

The minister noted that Marble Mountain is driving winter tourism opportunities in the western region, with visitation up 75 per cent in the past 10 years. Resident visits to the resort are up from 50,000 to 81,000 – or 62 per cent – while non-resident visits are up from 4,500 to 14,400 – a whopping 220 per cent.

"We have to build on that growth," Minister Jackman said. "We recognize that in order to remain a competitive destination for winter sport enthusiasts, the resort needs to move forward and ensure the visitor experience remains a fresh, dynamic one."

The Honourable Tom Marshall, MHA for Humber East, who was also on hand for the announcement, noted that the Marble Mountain resort is an economic generator for the entire west coast region.

"Hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, restaurants and businesses in general benefit from the visitor activity at Marble Mountain," Minister Marshall said. "We must also acknowledge, of course, that the support of local skiers and snowboarders has been integral to the success of the resort, and that the infrastructure improvements announced today will also enhance their experience on the slopes."

Jamie Schwartz, chair of the board of directors for Marble Mountain, said this new \$1.2 million investment will help ensure the resort can continue to meet the demands of its ever-increasing clientele and improve services to both new and avid skiers and snowboarders.

"This funding will allow us to expand and enhance what we offer to both local and destination skiers and snowboarders," Mr. Schwartz said. "Ski resorts need to evolve to meet the needs of their guests. Our plans have something for everyone – from beginners to experts."

Marble Mountain employs more than 100 people during its peak season of operation from December to April each year. The resort generates revenue in excess of \$2 million annually; and millions more in tourism-related spending and economic activity.

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BACKGROUNDER

The Marble Mountain Board of Directors' Capital Infrastructure Plans include investment in the following areas:

Surface Conveyor

Making a ski area's beginner terrain easy to access, and fun to navigate, are priorities in the development and growth of skiing. Marble Mountain's beginner terrain is well-utilized. This type of lift allows new skiers and snowboarders to ride up the slope easily.

Terrain Park Expansion

Terrain Parks are integral to the success of ski resorts. They have evolved into highly-technical and inventive playgrounds for skiers and snowboarders alike. Designing and expanding the park through excavation will allow the park to open earlier in the season. A well-built and designed park, is expected to attract more advanced skiers and snowboarders, and is essential to the future of Marble Mountain.

Terrain Development

Ski resorts must add to their trails and slopes to keep guests coming back. The board has plans to further develop slopes and terrain.

Lodge Upgrades

Upgrades to the Marble Mountain Lodge will ensure a continued, quality environment for visitors.

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